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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Al-Murad (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 81

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General (A/61/266)

Draft resolution (A/61/L.9)

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to welcome Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who will introduce the report of the Agency on its work during the past year.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. ElBaradei and the Agency on the award of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize, which crowned their efforts to prevent nuclear energy being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way. That is testimony to the pivotal role played by the Agency, whether in monitoring the development of atomic energy and its application for scientific purposes, and in providing assistance for this; in terms of the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries; or in terms of ensuring the safety and verification of nuclear installations and programmes. The most recent developments at the international level in this regard show how important it is for Member States to continue to support the Agency.

I now invite Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to introduce the report of the Agency for 2005.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): In the coming year, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will commemorate its fiftieth anniversary. There is much to be learned by looking back on this half century of Atoms for Peace in its many applications, from the days of the first power reactor operations, safeguards inspections and safety standards, all the way to our programme today. As we commemorate this anniversary, our goal is to broaden awareness of the scope of the IAEA's mission and activities — our contributions to development, nuclear safety and security, and nuclear non-proliferation — and to provide forums to review the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

For the past five decades, the role of nuclear power has been shaped by many factors, such as growing energy needs, economic performance, the availability of other energy sources, the quest for energy independence, environmental factors, nuclear safety and proliferation concerns and advances in nuclear technology.

In the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, the continued viability of nuclear power was viewed with scepticism for almost two decades. But recently we have seen rising expectations regarding the future role of nuclear power, particularly among developing countries. The rapid growth in global energy demand is putting a premium on all energy sources. Climate

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change concerns have highlighted the advantages of nuclear power in terms of its minimal greenhouse gas emissions. And the sustained nuclear safety and productivity record over the past 20 years has made nuclear operating costs relatively low and stable.

There are currently 442 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries, and they supply about 16 per cent of the world's electricity. To date, the use of nuclear power has been concentrated mostly in industrialized countries. But of the 28 new reactors currently under construction 16 are in developing countries. And while the highest percentage of existing reactors is in North America and Western Europe, recent expansion has been primarily in Asia and Eastern Europe.

Recently, the IAEA has begun emphasizing the role of energy for development, since it is becoming more and more clear that without energy there can be no development, and without development there is misery, which can often lead to violence. The energy shortage in developing countries is a staggering impediment to development. To put the matter in perspective, it is enough to mention that the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on average, consume electricity at a rate roughly a hundred times that of the world's least developed countries.

The IAEA offers energy assessment services that build a State's capability for energy analysis and energy planning, taking into account the country's economic, environmental and social development needs. These services treat all energy supply options equally. They are in increasingly high demand, and we have been expanding our capacity to offer them.

The Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in St. Petersburg this summer emphasized the importance of global energy security. During my participation at the expanded summit there, I emphasized that, in my view, global energy security means fulfilling the energy needs of all countries and peoples, including the 1.6 billion people who have no access to electricity, and the 2.4 billion people who continue to rely on traditional biomass fuels.

I also emphasized at that meeting that, in my view, the current global organization of energy resource management and distribution is quite fragmented, in terms of both geographical coverage and the types of energy resources managed. Global structures for setting norms, oversight and management exist in most other key areas of human activities, such as trade, civil aviation, labour relations and health, to name a few. However, no similar structure currently exists for energy.

It is important to note that, as a sophisticated technology, nuclear power requires a correspondingly sophisticated infrastructure. For new countries considering nuclear power, it is essential to ensure that such necessary infrastructure will be available. This infrastructure includes many components — from industrial infrastructure, such as manufacturing facilities, to the legal and regulatory framework, the institutional measures to ensure safety and security, and the necessary human and financial resources. The IAEA recently published guidance on the infrastructure needed for countries to introduce nuclear power, and we are working to define a set of milestones for the development of this infrastructure, to assist us in prioritizing our support for those member States.

Naturally, nuclear energy might not be the choice of all countries, and some, such as Germany and Sweden, have decided to phase out their nuclear power programmes. Other countries have also adopted a policy against the use of nuclear power. However, for those member States that choose to use nuclear power as part of their energy mix there is much that the Agency can do to make this option accessible, affordable, safe and secure.

For 50 years, technical cooperation has been a principal mechanism for implementing the IAEA's basic mission, Atoms for Peace. But 50 years ago many of the Member States that participated in the Technical Assistance Programme lacked all but the most rudimentary capabilities for applying nuclear science and technology. The IAEA role then involved a one-way transfer of technology to developing member States to help them establish basic scientific and technical capabilities.

Today, our Technical Cooperation Programme has evolved to be one of partnership that hinges on cooperation, the sharing of knowledge and expertise to promote sustainable growth and human security, in ways that contribute to many of the Millennium Development Goals. Many member State institutions now have capabilities equal to or exceeding those of the Agency. As a result, experience gained in one member State is often shared with others through a

variety of mechanisms. In Asia, Latin America and Africa, countries that were once heavily dependent on the Agency for advanced scientific expertise are now regional leaders in helping other countries in their region to make use of the varied peaceful nuclear applications.

Much of the IAEA's scientific work is focused on the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology in the fields of health, agriculture, industry, water management and preservation of the environment. The Agency works to build up member State scientific and technical capacities in a manner that supports their national development priorities. The IAEA also has projects that are designed to support regional priorities, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

These efforts are making a difference. Let me offer two brief examples.

For many years, IAEA assistance in the field of radiotherapy has been used to cure or mitigate the effects of cancer. Recently, however, the Agency began working on an ambitious scale, through its Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), to integrate radiotherapy into a broader cancer control framework, encompassing cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Over the past year, relationships have been built with the leading organizations in the field of cancer control and research, including the World Health Organization, in order to assist member States with comprehensive cancer control programmes. Collaborative efforts are now under way to create model demonstration sites for cancer control in five countries. These sites will be used to attract additional donors by raising the profile of cancer as a global health concern.

Secondly, with Agency assistance, Member States are using isotope hydrology to address problems of water shortages and the depletion of groundwater resources through overuse. An excellent example is the active participation of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru and Uruguay last year in a regional technical cooperation project for managing groundwater resources in Latin America. As a result of this project, hydrogeological maps were developed, conceptual models were validated and associated databases were made available. They are now in use in participating institutions.

The safety and security of nuclear activities around the globe remain key elements of the IAEA mandate. It is clear that the sustained effort to build a global nuclear safety regime is paying off. Operational safety performance at nuclear power plants remains strong. Occupational radiation protection indicators once again showed improvement over the past year. And we are continuing to make strides in strengthening physical protection at nuclear facilities and enhancing the security of nuclear material and radioactive sources worldwide.

But nuclear safety is not an issue that can ever be regarded as fixed. The strong, steady safety performance of recent years is reassuring, but the sporadic recurrence of events of concern makes it clear that the promotion of a strong safety culture — for both operators and regulators — should always be viewed as a work in progress.

The IAEA has for some time been emphasizing the need to better protect medical patients from inadvertently receiving excessive radiological doses. In the past three years, the number of Member States participating in projects in this area has increased more than threefold, from 21 to the current total of 78. The Agency is continuing its efforts to promote better safety performance in this area, including through improving access to related training.

The IAEA's nuclear security programme also continues to progress at a rapid pace. The Agency is helping member States to implement the new strengthened regime of nuclear security. Capacity-building activities in the past year have included nuclear security training courses, with participation by 88 States; the supply of detection and monitoring equipment; the procurement of physical protection equipment to improve the security of nuclear power plants and other installations; and assistance in protecting locations containing highly radioactive sources.

The Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database now has 93 States participating. Analysis of the database is providing insight into trends, risks and trafficking methods and routes. The number of incidents — more than a hundred per year for the past three years — demonstrates a persistent problem with trafficking, thefts, losses and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear or radioactive material. The number of incidents involving the detection of material at borders has increased substantially in recent years.

That is clearly due in part to the increased deployment by States of detection and monitoring equipment.

The nuclear non-proliferation and arms control regime continues to face a broad set of challenges. The number of States with safeguards agreements and additional protocols under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has steadily increased. We now have a total of 78 States with additional protocols in force. However, over a hundred States — including 25 with significant nuclear activities — have yet to bring additional protocols into force. And 36 non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have not yet fulfilled their legal obligation to bring into force safeguards agreements with the Agency. For the nuclear verification regime to be effective and credible, as I continue to state, we must have the necessary authority. I therefore urge all States to bring these instruments into force.

Since the end of December 2002, when IAEA verification activities were terminated at the request of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Agency has been unable to draw any conclusions regarding that country's nuclear activities.

The nuclear test reportedly carried out earlier this month by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a matter of deep and serious concern. The breaking of a de facto global moratorium on nuclear explosive testing that had been in place for nearly a decade and the addition of a new State with nuclear-weapon capacity are clear setbacks to international commitments to move towards nuclear disarmament. The Security Council has made it clear that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abandon its nuclear weapons programme in a verifiable manner.

This event also re-emphasizes the urgent need to establish a legally binding universal ban on nuclear testing through the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and it underscores the importance of finding a negotiated solution to the current situation. The resumption of dialogue between all the parties concerned is indispensable and urgent.

The IAEA stands ready to work with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and with all others — towards a solution that addresses the need of the international community to ensure that all nuclear activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are exclusively for peaceful purposes, while addressing the country's security and other concerns.

The implementation of the NPT safeguards agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been on the agenda of the IAEA Board of Governors for more than three years, and lately it has also been on the agenda of the Security Council. On 31 July 2006, the Council adopted resolution 1696 (2006), in which it called upon Iran to take the steps required by the Board in its resolution (GOV/2006/14) of 4 February 2006. Those steps in the Board's resolution, which spoke of the necessity for the IAEA to continue its work to clarify all outstanding issues relating to Iran's nuclear programme, included the re-establishment by Iran of full and sustained suspension of all its enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

In my report of 31 August to the Board and to the Security Council regarding Iran's fulfilment of the requirements of that resolution, I stated that Iran had not suspended its enrichment-related activities, nor had I been able to make progress on resolving the outstanding issues, issues that require certain transparency measures on the part of Iran. The IAEA continues, therefore, to be unable at this stage to confirm the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, which obviously is a matter of serious concern.

In that context, I still hope that, ultimately, through dialogue between Iran and its European and other partners, conditions will be created making it possible to engage in long overdue negotiations to achieve a comprehensive settlement that will supplement IAEA verification efforts in addressing international concerns about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme while also addressing Iran's security and other concerns.

The increase in global energy demand is driving a potential expansion in the use of nuclear energy. And concern is mounting regarding the proliferation risks created by the further spread of sensitive nuclear technology, such as uranium enrichment and spent-fuel reprocessing. The convergence of those realities points to the need for the development of a new framework for the nuclear fuel cycle.

For the past two years, I have been calling for the development of a new, multilateral approach to the nuclear fuel cycle as a key measure to strengthen non-proliferation and cope with the expected expansion of

nuclear power use. Establishing a framework that is equitable and accessible to all users of nuclear energy, acting in accordance with agreed nuclear non-proliferation norms, will be a complex endeavour that needs to be addressed through progressive steps.

The first step, in my view, is to establish mechanisms for assurance of the supply of fuel for nuclear power reactors — and, as needed, assurance of supply for the acquisition of such reactors. The second is to limit future enrichment and reprocessing to multilateral operations and to convert existing enrichment and reprocessing facilities from national to multilateral operations.

A broad range of ideas, studies and proposals have been put forward on this topic. At the IAEA General Conference last month we organized a special event in which experts from all relevant fields discussed ways and means to move forward. A report on the special event was submitted to our General Conference, and the IAEA secretariat, in close consultation with member States, will continue to work on identifying options and alternatives to move this important concept forward.

Fifty years after the Atoms for Peace initiative, the time has come, in my view, to think of a new framework for the use of nuclear energy, a framework that accounts for both the lessons we have learned and the current reality. This new framework should include innovative nuclear technology that is inherently safe, proliferation-resistant and more economical; universal application of comprehensive safeguards and the additional protocol; concrete and rapid progress towards nuclear disarmament; a robust international security regime; and an effective and universal nuclear safety regime.

Wherever we turn in today's world, it is evident that the intertwined issues of security and development continue to be the most daunting challenges facing humanity. And it is becoming more evident that the International Atomic Energy Agency has an important role to play in both fields. Its staff and management continue to do their utmost to make the Agency effective and efficient in carrying out its mission. But in all its areas of activity the IAEA also remains dependent on the shared commitment and partnership of the United Nations. I look forward to continuing that partnership in the years to come.

I would like in closing to express my appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the vision and leadership he has brought to the United Nations and its organs over the past 10 years. His support for the IAEA and its mission has been greatly appreciated, and I wish him well for the future.

Let me conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Government of Austria, which continues, as always, to be a welcoming and gracious host to the IAEA.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): As Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), I wish first to thank the Agency's Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for the statement he has just made and for his work in leading the Agency and organizing its activities, as well as for his close cooperation with the Board of Governors.

The Director General has highlighted the major achievements and activities of the Agency over the past year and has called our attention to the problems the Agency is facing and dealing with. Together with the information contained in the Agency's annual report, the Director General's statement presents the scope and the results of its activities in the past year. As Chairman of the Board of Governors, I can only confirm that the Board has been, in close cooperation with the secretariat of the Agency, actively involved in streamlining the activities presented in the report.

On behalf of the Republic of Slovenia, and in my capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/61/L.9 on the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. So far the draft resolution is sponsored by the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

Sponsorship, of course, is still open.

The draft resolution expresses broad consensus among the Agency's member States, confirmed during the consultations in Vienna and also here in New York. During the consultations in Vienna there was also a general understanding that the current text would not be unravelled or renegotiated here in New York.

The draft resolution which I have the honour to introduce is a factual update of last year's resolution on the same matter, following the same streamlined approach of a short substantive draft as that adopted in the past several years. It again takes note of the statement of the Director General; recognizes the importance of the work of the Agency; recognizes the cooperation between the United Nations and the Agency; takes note of the report of the Agency; and takes note of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Conference of the Agency at its fiftieth regular session in September this year.

The draft resolution reaffirms strong support for the indispensable role of the Agency in encouraging and assisting the development and application of atomic energy for peaceful uses, in technology transfer to developing countries and in nuclear safety, verification and security.

Finally, again as in the past, the draft resolution appeals to Member States to continue to support the activities of the Agency.

I repeat that the draft resolution is a factual update of the resolution adopted last year. However, it introduces the necessary changes of dates and, of course, updates the list of resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Conference of the Agency this year. Moreover, two paragraphs specific to last year's resolution are deleted: the paragraph concerning approval of the appointment of Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei as Director General, and the paragraph welcoming the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2005 to the Agency and to Mr. ElBaradei.

I conclude by expressing my sincere hope that, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the Agency and its important work, the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Schroderus-Fox (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

Allow me first to thank Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his statement on the report of the Agency's activities in 2005. The EU commends the secretariat of the IAEA and its Director General for the excellent work done by the Agency and for the important results achieved this year.

The EU member States welcome the outcome of the fiftieth IAEA General Conference, held in Vienna from 18 to 22 September 2006, and the resolutions and decisions adopted there.

The European Union member States are co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and fully support its content. The draft resolution, with over 70 sponsors, reflects broad agreement among the IAEA's member States. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Chairman of the IAEA Board of Governors, and sincerely hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The Agency officially turns 50 in July 2007. We have good reason to celebrate this important milestone and give due recognition to the Agency for the remarkable achievements attained during its lifetime. Allow me to briefly highlight a few elements of the role of the IAEA within the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and its contribution to it, as illustrated by the report submitted to the General Assembly.

The three pillars of the IAEA Statute — verification, safety and technology — are all as valid today as they were 50 years ago. The EU is profoundly committed to them, given that they form the basis of the Agency's accomplishments. They have stood firm amid challenges, and we are convinced that by promoting their agendas at the international level we are effectively promoting world peace and security.

However, although all the pillars are important, some are facing more urgent pressure than others. This has been true in particular of the IAEA's verification activities in recent years.

The IAEA has an important role to play within the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The European Union underlines the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The EU believes that the most important challenge to non-proliferation currently faced by the international community is non-compliance with the Treaty and the safeguards obligations stemming from it. The NPT stands as the cornerstone of international cooperation concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We urge all States not yet party to it to join as non-nuclear-weapon States.

We still regret that the 2005 NPT Review Conference was not able to produce a consensus document. However, we should be able to leave that failure behind us and concentrate on the present and the future. The European Union looks forward to the first Preparatory Committee meeting in 2007, which will lead to the Review Conference in 2010. We are committed to contributing actively to the successful outcome of the review process, and hope that it produces tangible results in all three areas of the NPT.

International threats to nuclear safety are a major concern for all Member States. Expressing full support for the IAEA in its pursuit of nuclear security should be required of all States. We express our highest regard for the IAEA's indispensable work in this field. One concrete example of our commitment to that task is the fact that the European Union is the largest donor to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF) this year. We call on all States to commit themselves to the financing of the Fund.

The IAEA remains the supreme actor for nuclear cooperation, and its impartial expertise is widely valued by all Agency member States. The role of the IAEA continues to be of pivotal importance in the global combat against nuclear terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons.

The international safeguards system is a fundamental part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential template for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT. Safeguards are an essential tool for monitoring the progression of peaceful nuclear activities. The European Union vigorously supports strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system, and stresses in this regard the importance of the fifth preambular paragraph of the NPT.

We reiterate that the comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, constitute the current IAEA verification standard. The European Union regrets that 105 States have yet to bring into force the additional protocols. It is of the utmost importance that the additional protocols, together with the comprehensive safeguards agreements, form the basis of action for all States.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the IAEA and is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution on its report.

Mr. Denot Medeiros (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the States members of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela — and the associated States, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

I should like at the outset to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his informative report, as well as for his leadership of the Agency, which, on behalf of the countries of our region, I congratulate on its forthcoming fiftieth anniversary.

Over the years, given the changing international context, the IAEA has become increasingly important and its action increasingly relevant. Its reports on nuclear activities give an account of the renewed interest in nuclear energy in various areas of the world. We therefore hope that this multilateral institution will be strengthened in terms of its capacity both to defend the inalienable right of countries to the development and peaceful use of nuclear energy and to undertake verification and safeguarding activities in support of the effective application of the obligations entered into under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

In this regard, we welcome Malawi, Mozambique, Palau and Montenegro as new members of the Agency. We also welcome the agreements entered into during the past year with regard to various aspects of the IAEA.

Our countries share and keep alive the spirit that gave rise to the Agency. In that context, we reaffirm the right of countries to the development and peaceful

use of nuclear energy, without discrimination, in compliance with international commitments. We are convinced that nuclear energy has an essential role to play, not only in generating clean energy, but also in other peaceful applications relating to, inter alia, human health, agriculture, food and water desalinization.

We must reiterate that the peaceful use of nuclear energy demands a climate of mutual confidence and cooperation. We believe that all members of the international community have an obligation to continue to move determinedly towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Therefore, attention should be drawn to the efforts of the countries of our region in establishing a strengthened verification mechanism, which should be cost-effective and applied in a rational and non-automatic manner.

Likewise, our countries attach particular importance to the efforts and achievements of the International Atomic Energy Agency and member States in strengthening international cooperation in the area of nuclear and radiological security, including the transportation and management of waste. In particular, we emphasize the progress being made as a result of various activities intended to maintain and increase a culture of security.

Particularly noteworthy, among other matters, are actions with regard to information and communication networks for radiological and nuclear security, and actions intended to strengthen national regulatory infrastructures for the control of the sources of radioactive materials.

I again draw attention to the importance that all our countries attach to the Common System for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (SCCC) established by Argentina and Brazil, which last July celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. No doubt Argentina will also remind us of that later in the debate.

Lastly, the MERCOSUR member States and associated States reaffirm their determination to continue to cooperate actively with the IAEA in order to strengthen its authority in its areas of competency, and also to find innovative and non-discriminatory solutions that are in compliance with the norms and principles of international law, with a view to contributing to the achievement of a safer and more stable world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Egypt to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I sincerely apologize for interrupting, but I understood that there was a request from the delegation of Palestine, in its capacity as Chair of the Arab Group of States, to make a statement at the beginning of our debate today. At first I did not see Palestine on the list of speakers, and then I saw it inscribed at the very end of the list.

I would like to highlight the fact that the delegation of Palestine will be speaking not in its national capacity, but as Chairperson of the Arab Group. Therefore, it should be accorded its position as such, at the beginning of the list of speakers. To begin distinguishing between Member States and Observers when speaking as representatives of regional or political groups would be a serious precedent, which we would not like to follow or establish in the General Assembly.

I understand that some say that that is what has happened and is happening in the First Committee. What happened there concerned an explanation of vote. As the delegation of Palestine in its national capacity does not have the right to vote, it also does not have the right to explain its vote.

But here we are speaking of a procedural precedent. The delegation of Palestine is the Chairperson of the Arab Group and should be accorded its position among the Chairpersons of the regional groups. Otherwise, we can end the practice of having the Chairpersons of the regional groups speak at the beginning of each item.

Therefore, Mr. President, I seek your ruling on this particular issue: that the delegation of Palestine should be accorded the possibility to speak among the Chairpersons of the regional groups, as the Chairperson of the Arab Group, not as the delegation of Palestine.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I think that all regional groups should make their statements, as is the practice, at the beginning of the debate. The Arab Group is entitled to express its views like any other regional group. Is it possible that the Chair of the Arab Group could speak following India?

Mr. Sayeed (India): The delegation of India thanks the Director General of the International Atomic

Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for presenting the report of the IAEA to the General Assembly.

The Agency's contribution was recognized through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. ElBaradei and the IAEA in 2005. India believes that the tribute was both timely and well deserved. The IAEA is a unique organization in the United Nations system, founded on a strong science base. As a founder member of the Agency, India has consistently played an active role in its work for the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The demand for nuclear power is growing in step with growing global energy needs. The exigencies of economic development, the finite nature of fossil fuels, and concerns linked both to their prices and their impact on global climate change, add to the attractiveness of nuclear power. The immense energy potential of nuclear fuels, readily available and deployable technologies, and the safety and productivity record of nuclear power over the past 20 years are likely to help maintain an upward trend in the demand for nuclear energy. Indeed, nuclear power is now an inevitable and indispensable part of the solution to the world's growing needs for energy.

India believes that the Agency should continue to pay special attention to the promotion and development of nuclear energy, especially in areas of the world where developmental needs and aspirations remain pressing and unfulfilled. As the report of the IAEA notes, 2005 was a year of rising expectations of nuclear energy, which kept pace with the steady growth in the global electricity market. Nuclear power accounted for 16 per cent of world electricity production, with a net increase in capacity of 2300 megawatts in 2005.

The report also notes that of the 26 nuclear power plants under construction, 15 are located in Asia. In India, with the TAPS-4 achieving criticality on 6 March 2005, and TAPS-3 on 21 May 2006, there are 16 operating power plants, with 7 under construction. Further, the Government of India has recently approved pre-project activities on eight additional reactor units. With the completion of all those units, the total nuclear power generation capacity in India will reach around 14,000 megawatts. The emerging possibility for expanding civil nuclear cooperation between India and the international community will supplement our domestic efforts to meet the developmental aspirations of our people through additional energy inputs.

India considers a closed nuclear fuel cycle of crucial importance for its well-established, three-stage nuclear power programme, with its long-term objective of tapping India's vast thorium resources. In the front end of the cycle, our programme is providing inputs to the indigenous pressurized heavy water reactor (PHWR) phase. In the back end of the fuel cycle, reprocessing of PHWR spent fuel has enabled India to successfully operate a fast breeder test reactor for two decades and to launch a commercial fast breeder programme. The technology of reprocessing irradiated thorium fuel has been developed, and the U-233 recovered so far has been utilized to fuel a small reactor. A comprehensive capability in the area of nuclear waste management has been achieved.

India's participation in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project is recognition of its advanced capabilities and its record of responsibility in the area of nuclear energy. India has been an active participant in the activities of the Agency under the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO), and has applied the INPRO methodology to analysing nuclear systems for hydrogen generation and in the study of closed fuel cycles using fast reactors. India supports the Agency's work towards the development of small and medium-sized reactors for technology development for additional applications and for expanding nuclear power.

Indian experts have also contributed to the work of the International Nuclear Desalination Advisory Group. We have offered to share our experience and identify future areas of work in nuclear desalination. We are also bringing our national commitment and professional expertise to the IAEA activities in the areas of plasma physics and fusion research.

The ageing of the workforce in many areas of nuclear applications is a matter of serious concern for a number of States. India supports the efforts of the Agency to preserve and maintain nuclear knowledge through all databases, and in particular the International Nuclear Information System (INIS) database, which provides free access to students at 283 universities and has over a million authorized users. We take note of the support provided by the Agency to 75 students from 33 countries to attend the

first Summer Institute of the World Nuclear University. Given the long-term benefits, we encourage the Agency to continue its support for potential students from developing countries.

India has been supportive of the technical cooperation activities undertaken under the IAEA's aegis. This year India has pledged $324,800 for the Technical Cooperation Fund for 2007. We have reinforced our financial contribution by providing technical experts, hosting meetings, symposiums and workshops and offering training facilities.

India maintains that the promotional role of the Agency is of direct, visible and measurable benefit to its member States. We commend the activities of the Agency in promoting the application of nuclear technology in the areas of food and agriculture, human health, water resources management, protection of the environment and industry.

India notes with appreciation the setting up of the IAEA Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund. At the 50th Session of the General Conference of the IAEA the Prime Minister of India announced India's offer of a recently developed cobalt-60 teletherapy machine — Bhabhatron — as our contribution to the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT).

The international community has recognized the need to protect and secure radiological materials because of the increasing global concern that terrorists could gain access to them. India therefore supports the efforts of the Agency to ensure safety and promote a global security culture, and attaches high priority to the issue. India has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and actively participated in the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. India has also participated in the regional radiological security initiative and has been conducting courses under the aegis of the IAEA in India on a regular basis. India successfully conducted, for the third consecutive year, the regional course on physical protection of nuclear installations.

If we are to be successful in realizing the benefits of atomic energy, we need to act in concert and adhere to our respective international commitments. The IAEA and the Director General deserve our compliments for ensuring that the Agency continues to be the global community's platform for addressing these issues in a spirit of harmony and consensus, in accordance with its Statute. In keeping with its commitment and its record as a responsible State with advanced nuclear technology, India is prepared to supplement international efforts for the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The issue of assuring supplies of nuclear fuel in a manner that does not cause proliferation concerns has been attracting attention in recent times. Different countries and groups of countries have proposed various schemes in that regard. A special event, "New Framework for the Utilization of Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century: Assurances of Supply and Non-Proliferation", was organized alongside the recently concluded 50th IAEA General Conference, when those proposals and related issues were discussed. India made a presentation at the event, entitled "The Twin Challenges of Abundant Nuclear Energy Supply and Proliferation Risk Reduction — A View".

Indian capability in nuclear fuel cycle activities is well recognized. India believes that a closed fuel cycle is essential if nuclear power is to make sustained contributions on a large enough scale to meet global energy needs. India also believes that the reprocessing and recycling of nuclear fuel is essential, not only for that purpose, but also for the reduction of long-term radio-toxicity and the security implications of the disposal of spent fuel. Further, thorium offers an excellent matrix for the efficient burning of surplus plutonium, with a much greater degree of proliferation resistance and a very low minor actinide burden.

With its well-established high level of research and development capabilities and sizeable pool of highly qualified and trained manpower, India is prepared for, and has offered to supplement, international efforts for the sustainable growth of nuclear energy worldwide, while addressing proliferation concerns.

The prospect of the rapid depletion of global fossil fuel and the burden imposed by rising fuel prices, combined with concerns about global climate change, have brought out the vital importance of nuclear energy. India believes that it is possible and feasible to enhance the share of nuclear energy as a clean energy source of the future, while taking care of the imperatives of nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation. India stands willing to support the efforts of the international community and the International Atomic Energy Agency towards the further

development of nuclear energy to meet the growing energy needs of the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): As we have agreed, I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine, who will speak on behalf of the member States of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the members of the Group of Arab States, I extend our sincere appreciation to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his important presentation today of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on its activities over the past year.

The Arab States appreciate the Agency's constructive role in strengthening international peace and security through its activities in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. We also recognize the Agency's important contribution to the attainment of international priorities in sustainable development, through its activities and achievements in the transfer of nuclear technology, know-how, technical cooperation, verification and nuclear safety.

Technical cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is one of the Agency's principal activities, given its direct contribution to the achievement of peoples' development goals, especially in developing countries. The Arab States appreciate the Agency's work in developing and modernizing its technical cooperation strategy in order to serve the development priorities of its members and in identifying the vital and concrete short and medium-term activities and contributions that nuclear technology can make.

We reaffirm that funding for the Agency's work in the field of technical cooperation and technology transfer must increase continually, especially since those activities are the pillars of the Agency's work as laid down in its Statute.

In that regard, the Arab States reaffirm their support for, and encouragement of, the IAEA's strategy to focus on projects that provide tangible economic returns. We welcome the practical steps taken by the Agency towards the early holding of consultations with Member States with regard to the details of the projects that countries would like to propose. We also welcome its preparation of a framework of action for every State that incorporates projects for future cooperation in the service of national sustainable development programmes.

With regard to verification and safeguards, the IAEA undoubtedly plays a primary role in completing the conceptual framework for integrated safeguards. However, that framework will not be effective without achieving universality of its components, at the forefront of which is the universality of the comprehensive safeguards. Moreover, the ongoing shortcomings in achieving the universality of the Agency's comprehensive safeguards will jeopardize our intensive efforts to eliminate the dangers of nuclear proliferation. The Agency must therefore seek to ensure the universal character of the comprehensive safeguards as the main pillar of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It must also work to bring every country, without exception, under the safeguards regime.

The Arab States have undertaken many initiatives at the regional and international levels to address the dangers resulting from nuclear proliferation. Since 1974, Arab countries have called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That call has been the subject of an annual resolution that the General Assembly has adopted by consensus since 1980. In addition, through the IAEA, Arab countries continue to call for the implementation of the IAEA's comprehensive safeguards regime at all nuclear installations in the Middle East, without exception.

It is regrettable that, despite all those initiatives to guarantee security and stability in the region, Israel has not demonstrated any serious engagement in addressing the issue of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Israel continues to refuse to place all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime, a refusal that negatively impacts all efforts aimed at dealing with the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in general, and in the Middle East in particular.

That situation places a dual responsibility on the international community, namely, to eliminate all dangers to international peace and security posed by nuclear proliferation and to seek to implement the Agency's nuclear safeguards in the Middle East. In that regard, Arab States call for support for the IAEA Director General's fulfilment of the mandate given to him by the Agency's General Conference in order to implement the safeguards regime in the Middle East.

The Arab States would like to emphasize that they attach the utmost importance to including on the agenda of the fifty-first General Conference of the IAEA, and future Conferences, an item on the threat posed by Israel's nuclear capabilities.

The first step towards building confidence and establishing comprehensive peace in our region is to give up the nuclear option and declare the region a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, while placing all the region's nuclear installations under the comprehensive IAEA safeguards regime. That is especially necessary given the ongoing threat posed by activities outside the scope of the IAEA safeguards. I refer in particular to possible environmental disasters resulting from lax safety procedures or the careless disposal of nuclear wastes, as described in numerous reports of the United Nations and other international bodies.

With regard to nuclear security, it is worth noting that there is an urgent need to support and strengthen the activities and programmes of the Agency aimed at protecting nuclear materials and installations, and other radioactive materials, from the threat of nuclear terrorism. There is also a need for the Agency to take advantage of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, signed by over a hundred States to date, in order to bring under control nuclear materials that are currently subject to no international supervision or monitoring and avert the risk or threat of their falling into the hands of terrorists.

In the light of the foregoing, we reaffirm our position as regards the production of fissile materials. That position is based on the need to place all nuclear materials, including nuclear stockpiles, under international supervision. We also emphasize the need to conclude an international agreement on this issue as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I would like to express the appreciation of the Arab States for the intensive and effective efforts made in Vienna to prepare the draft resolution, and to reaffirm our continued support for the role and work of the IAEA to fulfil humankind's various needs in the field of nuclear energy, thereby bringing about a more secure and prosperous future for all peoples of the Middle East and the world.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his detailed report on the work of the Agency in the past year.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Agency. Over the past half century, it has had remarkable achievements in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those successes have been widely welcomed in the international community. China hopes that, with the support of all member States, the Agency will play a more active role in the areas I have mentioned.

Promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is one of the two main functions of the Agency, which in recent years has done a great deal to strengthen technical cooperation. It has taken a series of steps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of that cooperation, and has achieved remarkable results. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that there continue to be challenges in this area. In its work the Agency continues to give priority to safeguards over technical cooperation, where the problem of lack of financial resources has yet to be resolved. We hope that the Agency will continue to urge all its member States to pay more attention to technical cooperation and ensure its smooth implementation.

During the past year China has actively supported and participated in technical cooperation projects, carrying out 18 national and 63 regional and interregional projects, covering nuclear electric power generation, nuclear physics, nuclear chemistry, nuclear engineering technology, and so on. As always, China will further enhance its cooperation with the Agency and all member States in the area of the peaceful use of the nuclear energy.

With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, China consistently opposes any form of nuclear-weapon proliferation. We support the Agency's unremitting efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system. It is our hope that the Agency will further promote the universality and effectiveness of the additional protocol.

China has always supported the Agency in its efforts to enhance nuclear security and safety. On 29 April 2006, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

During the meeting of the Agency's Board of Governors in September, China officially submitted to the Director General its instrument of accession to the Joint Convention. China has also decided to join the IAEA's Illicit Trafficking Database, in order to tighten control of illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials and to promote the exchange of information on the matter among member States.

China appreciates the Agency's long-standing objective and appropriate role in resolving important nuclear issues, and supports it in continuing its remarkable work. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly set out China's position as regards the question of the Korean peninsula nuclear issue and the Iranian nuclear issue.

With regard to the former, China has always been committed to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and in the North-east Asia region, and to bringing about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We have always advocated resolving the Korean peninsula nuclear issue peacefully, through dialogue and negotiation. China firmly opposes the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the current circumstances, it is our hope that all parties concerned will act to safeguard the stability of the Korean peninsula and North-east Asia, continue to pursue the denuclearization of the peninsula and adhere to the goal of a peaceful resolution through dialogue and negotiation. China calls upon all the parties concerned to remain calm and exercise restraint, adopt cautious and responsible attitudes and make joint efforts to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.

China believes that the Six-Party Talks are still the most realistic and feasible means to resolve the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. China is willing to maintain close contact with all parties concerned, promote the Six-Party Talks and play a constructive role in realizing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula and in North-east Asia.

With regard to the Iran nuclear issue, China — as it has throughout — supports preserving the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, opposes the proliferation of nuclear weapons, advocates a peaceful resolution of the Iran nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiations, and endorses the Agency's active role in that regard.

A peaceful solution through diplomatic negotiations is still the best option, in the common interests of the international community. We hope that the Iranian side will respond to the appeal of the international community by adopting a constructive attitude and creating conditions for the resumption of dialogue. We also hope that the other parties concerned will remain calm and restrained, continue to seek a peaceful resolution and make full use of creative thinking, so as to find effective ways to achieve appropriate solutions to the Iran nuclear issue, rather than taking measures that may complicate the current situation.

China has actively promoted dialogue and will, with the other parties concerned, continue to play a constructive role in the peaceful resolution of the Iran nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiations.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I join other speakers in thanking Mr. ElBaradei for presenting the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We are confident that the IAEA, under his dynamic leadership, will continue its laudable work to promote, in particular, the peaceful uses of nuclear technology. We assure Mr. ElBaradei and his team of our full support.

We share the Agency's assessment that the global need for energy is growing as a result of rising oil and natural gas prices. We also agree with the Agency's identification of other future trends: environmental constraints on the use of fossil fuels; concerns about the security of energy supplies; and expansion plans for nuclear power. The role of nuclear energy will therefore be crucial, especially in meeting the socio-economic development needs of the developing countries.

We continue to note with interest that of the 26 nuclear power plants under construction worldwide, the majority — 15 — are located in Asia. The pace of their construction could be further increased if States were not subjected to undue restrictions. We hope that the Agency will formulate a comprehensive policy to that end.

As one of the IAEA's earliest member States, Pakistan has long been a strong advocate of promoting and harnessing nuclear technology for peace, progress

and prosperity for all. For its part, Pakistan has established several training centres, including a full-fledged university for nuclear science and engineering, meeting both our own need for technical manpower and the training requirements of other countries, including through the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme.

Pakistan has developed the entire range of nuclear fuel cycle facilities. We now have two nuclear power plants in operation, and a third is under construction. In parallel with the development of the nuclear fuel cycle, an extensive programme for the application of nuclear technology and radioisotopes in agriculture, hydrology and the medical and industrial sectors is also under way.

In agriculture, Pakistan has established in various parts of the country four nuclear agricultural research centres, which are engaged in research work to help farmers grow and harvest more and better-quality crops. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission's agricultural research institutes, utilizing nuclear techniques, have been able to evolve 57 crop varieties characterized by their higher yield and their resistance to various pests and diseases. Similarly, the indigenous development of bio-fertilizers offers cost-effective solutions with regard to various crops affected by chemical fertilizers. Plans are under way to establish five commercial food irradiators in various cities. These irradiation facilities will enhance the export of food commodities, especially fruits and vegetables.

In the area of medical science, Pakistan has 13 nuclear medicine and oncology centres, providing diagnostic and treatment facilities to several hundred thousand patients each year. About 70 per cent of those patients are provided with free treatment. Six more nuclear medical centres are being built.

We attach the highest importance to the Technical Cooperation Programme of the IAEA. We have benefited from it and contributed to it in the form of training, the provision of experts and the hosting of seminars and workshops. We are pleased to note that the overall implementation rate of the IAEA's technical cooperation activities in Pakistan during 2004 achieved a record high of 75.8 per cent. We look forward to further strengthening and expansion.

In recent years, Pakistan's economy has registered a remarkable growth rate. As a country with more than 150 million people, Pakistan considers nuclear power generation to be an indispensable element of its national energy security strategy. The Government of Pakistan has therefore launched a 25-year Energy Security Plan to respond to that high growth rate and to cater for the rising demand for energy.

The Plan envisages an increase of nuclear electricity generation from the present 425 megawatts to 8,800 megawatts by 2030, representing an increase in the share of nuclear energy from the present 0.8 per cent to only 4.2 per cent. By 2030, our per capita consumption of electricity is expected to rise to only 3,920 kilowatt-hours per year, as compared with the present 13,800 kilowatt-hours per year in the developed world.

Our limited fossil fuel resources, coupled with a growing population and an expanding economy, on the one hand, and a projected rise in the share of energy produced from burning coal alone from the current 6.5 per cent to 19 per cent in 2030, on the other, present the great challenge of balancing industrial pollution and sustained economic growth.

For over 30 years Pakistan has enjoyed an excellent operational and safety record at its two nuclear power plants, the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) and the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (CHASNUPP). The existence of a reliable infrastructure relevant to those nuclear power plants has enabled us to commence work on another nuclear power station, CHASNUPP II.

As we seek to operationalize our Energy Security Plan, we envisage the import of nuclear plants and other relevant civilian nuclear technology. We hope that the international community will adopt a non-discriminatory and criteria-based approach in extending civil nuclear technology and cooperation to developing countries.

We accord the highest level of importance to the safety and security of our nuclear installations, particularly as we expand our nuclear power generation capacity for economic development. Pakistan has successfully established a strong safety culture in its nuclear activities. We are diligently adhering to the principles of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. We have further strengthened security measures around our nuclear installations to avoid any possibility of sabotage or the illicit acquisition or trafficking of nuclear material. Pakistan has subjected itself to review

by its peers at all three meetings of the contracting parties held since the inception of the Convention.

Pakistan has also been participating in the Agency's advisory and expert groups, such as the Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation, the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles and the International Nuclear Desalination Advisory Group. We value the Agency's efforts in coordinating and disseminating information on the latest developments in nuclear power technology. We suggest further strengthening of the Agency's programme on nuclear knowledge management and information services.

The safety and verification aspects of the IAEA's mandate remain important pillars of that mandate. As regards the strengthening of the Agency's safeguards system, Pakistan stresses the need for an approach balancing the promotional aspects and safety- or security-related concerns in all of the Agency's functions.

In the broader context of the Agency's work, we attach great importance to the proposal to expand the Board of Governors and make it more representative. We urge member States to consider that issue with an open mind and take early action.

We share the view that all States should fully comply with their respective safeguards obligations. At the same time, the Agency's safeguards should not be used to serve partisan political objectives. Its verification regime can remain credible only if it is applied on a non-discriminatory basis, as stipulated in the Agency's Statute. Cooperation and greater understanding are required of all member States of the Agency to advance its mandate on the basis of impartiality, equity and professionalism. Efforts are also required to correct the public perception of the IAEA as being only a nuclear watchdog agency. Its primary role in the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology needs to be re-emphasized.

Recent developments have revealed that the old consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation has broken down. Pakistan has proposed the convening of a special conference to evolve a new consensus that responds to the current and emerging realities. Such a conference could help promote universal nuclear disarmament under verified international controls. This new consensus should eliminate the discrimination and double standards that characterize the present non-proliferation arrangements. It should also evolve an agreed basis for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the appropriate international safeguards, in accordance with the international obligations of States and on a non-discriminatory basis. Above all, as Mr. ElBaradei advocated, ways and means must be found to normalize the relationship between the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the non-NPT nuclear-weapon States.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): This year we have begun to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which will be commemorated in 2007. This is an opportune time to highlight the important role that the Agency has played for half a century in the promotion of peace and development. We believe that last year's recognition of the work of the IAEA, through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Agency and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, is well deserved.

The 2005 annual report of the IAEA highlights the increase of expectations for the use of nucleo-electric energy in different parts of the world. We endorse actions, including the promotion and dissemination of public information, aimed at guaranteeing that such energy will play a key role in the world's energy development in the near future. Moreover, the renewed interest in the nuclear option to produce energy is closely related to the issue of guaranteed nuclear fuel supplies, which should in no circumstances become the monopoly of a few.

Cuba considers the guarantee of an adequate balance among the Agency's diverse activities under its Statute, particularly between verification and technical cooperation, to be a key objective. The attempts of some States to give increasing weight to the IAEA's verification role, to the detriment of its promotional function in nuclear technologies, are unacceptable.

We note with concern the negative image of nuclear watchdog that many mass media have given to the Agency, which actually distorts its mandate in verification and safeguards matters. That distortion ensures that the community lacks adequate information and may even be unaware of the IAEA's important technical cooperation efforts to promote the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

Cuba accords special interest to nuclear technologies and their applications in areas of great importance to social and economic life, such as health, agriculture and food, industry, hydrology and environmental protection. That is why our Government is overseeing an important revitalization of those applications, as evidenced in its significant investment in diagnostic and therapeutic equipment installed in hospitals throughout our country. We attach great importance to and reaffirm our support for the IAEA Programme for Action for Cancer Therapy, one of the Agency's most noble projects. We also reiterate the need to endow the Programme with the financial resources necessary for its implementation.

Cuba, a founding country of the IAEA and an active member for more than three decades, accords very high priority to its technical cooperation, as evidenced in our timely fulfilment of our financial commitments to the Technical Cooperation Fund and the payment of 100 per cent of our national participation expenditure; the execution of 87 per cent of our national projects, a rate much higher than the average; and our contribution over the past 10 years of more than 300 Cuban experts to technical missions overseas.

We have achieved all that despite the tight economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba, which entails considerable difficulties in the purchase of equipment and reagents and hinders the participation of our scientists in IAEA forums held in this country, to mention but two examples.

Cuba attaches particular importance to cooperation among developing countries. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean as a key mechanism to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy among the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Despite the proclaimed end of the cold war, there are currently some 32,000 nuclear weapons in the world, 12,300 of which are ready for immediate use. Programmes to upgrade nuclear weapons have not stopped. The only secure and effective way to avoid the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination. The mere existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that prescribe their possession and use are a threat to international peace and security. Cuba therefore reaffirms the historic position of the Non-Aligned Movement, reiterated at its successful summit in Havana in September, that nuclear disarmament is and should continue to be the highest priority in the field of disarmament.

We reject the attempts of some to prejudge whether the nuclear programmes of certain countries are peaceful or not, in disregard of the IAEA's criteria. The IAEA is the only authority competent to verify the fulfilment of obligations entered into under the respective safeguards agreements of its member States. No State, no matter how powerful, has the right to arrogate that mandate unto itself.

We declare our firm support for respect for the inalienable rights of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination, so long as those rights are exercised in accordance with the safeguards obligations.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that Cuba has fulfilled and will rigorously fulfil its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol. We will spare no effort in joining forces towards the achievement of the IAEA's objectives. Cuba will continue to support the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a secure manner and to contribute to the achievement of international peace and international disarmament.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): My delegation thanks Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive report on the Agency's activities. In addition, we commend the Director General and his staff for their dedication to fulfilling their responsibilities with integrity and professionalism.

Over the past five decades, the IAEA has stood firm as the central body dedicated to promoting the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as to stemming the spread of nuclear weapons. The bestowal of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize on the IAEA and its Director General was a well-deserved recognition of the Agency's significant contributions to international peace, security and development.

The Republic of Korea has been a strong supporter of the Agency's work and is committed to maintaining full cooperation in all areas of the Agency's activity. As we reflect on our long-standing partnership with the Agency in this semi-centennial anniversary year, allow me to highlight a few areas that we deem particularly important to the future development of the IAEA.

First, we believe that universal adherence to the Additional Protocol to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an essential measure for improving the current safeguards and verification regime. We are disappointed that, as of today, only 78 countries are participating in the Additional Protocol. We believe that all States should sign, ratify and fully implement the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

Secondly, we support current endeavours to develop a new framework for the utilization of nuclear energy with the aim of providing reliable access to nuclear fuel and technologies while controlling sensitive nuclear activities. As a country that relies heavily on nuclear energy, with 20 nuclear power plants in operation, the Republic of Korea will actively participate in the relevant discussions on that issue.

Thirdly, my Government supports the work of the IAEA Advisory Committee on Safeguards and Verification. Given that one year has already passed since its establishment, it is high time for the Committee to fulfil its mandate by recommending to the IAEA Board an initial set of measures to strengthen the safeguards system.

Fourthly, the Republic of Korea will continue to lend strong support to the IAEA's efforts to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to nurture a culture of nuclear safety and security, as a means of ensuring the sustainable use of nuclear power to meet States' development needs.

The nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 October 2006 poses a grave threat not only to the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and North-east Asia, but also to the global non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's behaviour is in outright defiance of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the 19 September 2005 Joint Statement agreed at the Six-Party Talks, Security Council resolution 1695 (2006) and the Statement (S/PRST/2006/41) by the President of the Council on 6 October.

In response to such a reckless act by North Korea, on 14 October the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1718 (2006), which stated that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had an obligation to abandon all its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, as well as to act strictly in accordance with the obligations applicable to parties under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the terms and conditions of its IAEA Safeguards Agreement. My Government strongly welcomes and supports the Council's stern and swift decision, and requests the IAEA to do everything in its capacity to fulfil the mandate reinforced by the Security Council.

My Government has made it clear in the strongest terms that this provocative act by North Korea will not be condoned, and that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons should not be tolerated. In this regard, we urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with the requirements of resolution 1718 (2006) by abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and returning to the Six-Party Talks immediately, without preconditions. To this end, my Government will work closely with all parties concerned for the faithful implementation of the resolution, while keeping the window of a diplomatic solution open.

We note the Director General's statement that the IAEA will work towards a solution that addresses the concerns of the international community on the nature of the nuclear activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We fully support this statement and believe in the Agency's critical role in upholding the nuclear security and safeguards system.

Mr. Al-Jarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly examines today one of the most important items on its agenda, in view of its close link to the principles on which the United Nations was established, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

First, I pay tribute to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his presentation of the Agency's report. We also align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The State of Kuwait, having reviewed the annual report, would like to express its appreciation to the Director General and the IAEA staff for their tireless efforts to fulfil the goals and aspirations of all peoples and countries of the world, through the promotion of the principles of peaceful use of atomic energy for the benefit of all mankind.

The Technical Cooperation Programme is one of the important pillars of the IAEA in building the national capacities of developing countries and ensuring the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful uses by them. The State of Kuwait, since its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on 15 August 1968, focuses in its cooperation programme with the IAEA's Department of Technical Cooperation on the execution of a number of projects that relate to building national capacity and special laboratories to measure the levels of radioactive isotopes in the marine and terrestrial territory of Kuwait.

In view of our belief in the importance of training national personnel in preventing nuclear radiation and in the safe handling of radioactive material, my country has hosted over the past three years a number of regional workshops in cooperation with the IAEA. We continue to send our trainees to participate in the seminars and workshops organized at IAEA headquarters.

The IAEA cannot play its pivotal and critical role in preventing the use of nuclear power for military purposes, and in its exploitation for peaceful purposes, without the concerted efforts of all States. We note with deep regret that the IAEA's call to some advanced nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its comprehensive safeguards regime has not been answered, a matter that will impact negatively on international peace and security.

In this regard, the Middle East will not attain its objectives of security and stability so long as Israel remains the only regional Power that continues to resist subjecting its nuclear installations to the IAEA safeguards regime. This is a major obstacle to achieving the universality of the NPT and greatly undermines the non-proliferation system. This anomaly might give other States a reason to acquire nuclear weapons, or manufacture them, because of leniency towards, and disregard of, the activities of countries that refuse to place their nuclear installations under the safeguards regime.

Israel's intransigence with regard to cooperating with the IAEA is likely to exacerbate instability and tension in the Middle East and will impede the implementation of calls to make the Middle East, including the Gulf region, free of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the State of Kuwait demands that the item relating to the Israeli nuclear capabilities and threats be on the agenda of the fifty-first General Conference of the IAEA.

In addition, the State of Kuwait urges the friendly Islamic Republic of Iran to continue to cooperate and coordinate with the IAEA and the international community in order to dispel concerns and misgivings about the nature and purposes of its nuclear programme, and to affirm peace and security in the region. Diplomacy should be given a full chance to ensure a peaceful resolution that will steer the entire region away from more crises. This can be achieved by all the parties concerned through flexibility, wisdom and responsibility.

In closing, I wish to express my country's hope that the international community will continue to support the IAEA in its work in order to ensure the full, not selective, application of all treaties relating to disarmament, including the NPT, with its three main pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of atomic energy.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are glad to welcome the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and thank him for presenting the Agency's annual report.

As an active member of the IAEA, Russia is satisfied with the highly professional work of the Agency, and recognizes its important and growing role in strengthening the international nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime and ensuring the level of confidence required for cooperation in the peaceful and safe development of atomic energy. The IAEA is a unique international institution, possessing the authority to assess the compliance of States with their obligations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework. We support further improvement of the Agency's verification mechanism and development of its control activities.

Special attention must be paid to universalization of the additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement as an essential instrument for increasing the efficiency of the IAEA safeguards activities to verify compliance of States with their obligations under the NPT.

This year, during its Group of Eight (G-8) presidency, Russia has made considerable efforts in its work with other States on a bilateral basis and in other formats to expand the application of the geography of the additional protocol. The G-8 has appealed to a number of countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the additional protocol.

Russia has provided, and will continue providing, assistance in strengthening the system of IAEA safeguards, by, inter alia, financing the national programme of scientific and technical support for the safeguards activities of the Agency. The promotion of efficient international efforts in the field of non-proliferation is especially relevant and is dictated by the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of terrorists. The atrocity of terrorist acts perpetrated in Russia and elsewhere underscores the need to ensure secure guarantees in order to prevent the access of terrorists to such weapons, first by consolidating joint efforts to establish a global system for countering new challenges and threats, in particular in the nuclear sphere.

We once again draw attention to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, recently announced by the Presidents of Russia and the United States. This initiative, which offers an opportunity for joint action by all countries concerned on the basis of national efforts, calls for the launch of concrete cooperation, primarily to implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, in whose drafting in 2005 Russia played a leading role.

This year the IAEA has focused on the development of conditions to promote compliance with non-proliferation norms. In the nuclear field, it envisages the elaboration of practical measures to ensure access to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy for countries that faithfully honour their obligations. This goal is pursued through the initiative of the President of Russia, Mr. Putin, to develop a global nuclear energy infrastructure envisaging the establishment of international centres for the provision of nuclear fuel cycle services.

As a first step, Russia is willing to conduct a joint project on an international uranium enrichment centre, under IAEA safeguards, on the basis of one of its enrichment plants. This is in line with Russia's efforts to develop peaceful nuclear energy and the concept of energy as a support for the sustainable development of mankind put forward by our President at the Millennium Summit in New York. The initiative supports the IAEA's efforts in its multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, and aims at establishing an international regime of guaranteed supplies of nuclear fuel.

The implementation of these proposals will allow us to work out all the elements for the establishment and operation of international centres to provide nuclear fuel cycle services and promote international cooperation in nuclear safety, including training and certification of nuclear power plant operators. It will also create a political and economic environment that discourages non-nuclear States from any attempt to acquire WMD-proliferation-sensitive nuclear technologies.

The IAEA plays an important role in the development of innovative nuclear technologies in support of the International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO), which was implemented within the framework of the Russian President's initiative on energy support for the sustainable development of mankind. It provides a pivotal solution to the problems of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and environmental recovery of the earth.

We highly appreciate the progress in strengthening nuclear safety achieved over recent years. With active IAEA participation, we have achieved great success in increasing the safety of nuclear power plant operation and handling of radioactive materials, waste and sources. We support the IAEA activities in technical cooperation with, and assistance to, developing countries.

Let me also touch on a number of prominent aspects of IAEA activities. We understand that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will fully comply with the requirements contained in Security Council resolution 1718 (2006), and, in particular, will return to NPT and IAEA safeguards. At the same time,

we look forward to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks process, with its final goal of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We call for a balanced solution to this issue ensuring the legitimate interests of all parties to the negotiating process.

The IAEA potential is also far from being exhausted in resolving the Iranian nuclear problem through political and diplomatic means. We need to work out solutions that would, on the one hand, remove all doubts about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities and, on the other, ensure the legitimate energy needs of that country. Russia will continue to provide its assistance in resolving this issue.

In conclusion, I reiterate our support for the draft resolution on the IAEA report. As a sponsor, Russia fully appreciates the importance of the work conducted by the Agency, and is certain that this work will be continued in the interest of strengthening international security and development.

Mr. De Figueiredo (Angola): I join in congratulating the President and her team on her election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. With her wide experience and diplomatic skills, she will no doubt steer this session to a successful conclusion. I assure her of my country's full support.

I also convey my Government's congratulations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on winning the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. Such an award is indeed a great recognition of their work and efforts to ensure the peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy.

In addition, the Government of the Republic of Angola greatly appreciates the Agency's decision that its share of the prize shall be used to create a special fund to support fellowships and training to improve cancer control, and to support the use of stable isotope techniques in childhood nutritional studies in developing countries.

We have carefully reviewed the Agency's annual report for 2005 and would like to express our appreciation for the activities carried out during the past year under the three pillars of its mandate: technology, safety and verification.

The Angolan Government appreciates the Agency's endeavours in the development of nuclear applications and technologies, to the benefit of the developing countries, and strongly supports the strengthening of technical cooperation activities, in particular those related to the transfer of nuclear science and technology.

My Government attaches paramount importance to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Programme, as it is an effective contribution to the transfer of nuclear science and technology to member States for building, strengthening and maintaining their capabilities for the use of such science and technology in a safe, secure and sustainable manner, thereby contributing to socio-economic development. However, this objective can only be reached with the availability of adequate human and financial resources. Accordingly, the resources of the Technical Cooperation Fund should be at a sufficient level, predictable and capable of assuring implementation of the Programme.

We express our appreciation to the Agency for its activities in areas such as agriculture and food, human health, human resources management, water resources management, the environment, knowledge management, the sterile insect technique, nuclear security, and so forth, as well as for its establishing partnerships with other international organizations, as well as with national and regional institutions.

As members are well aware, the tsetse fly and the trypanosomosis disease which it transmits are a major transboundary problem in Africa and one of the greatest constraints on the continent's socio-economic development, affecting the health of humans and livestock, limiting land use and causing increased poverty. This disease claims tens of thousands of human lives and millions of livestock every year, and threatens over 60 million people in 37 countries, most of which are Agency members. In this regard, the Republic of Angola supports the Agency's activities aimed at the eradication of the tsetse fly through the use of the sterile insect technique, and encourages continued support for African member States in their efforts to build national capabilities and further develop the techniques for applying the technique in creating tsetse-free zones. In the same vein, my country notes with great appreciation the Agency's support for the African Union's Pan African Tse Tse and Trypanosomosis Eradication Campaign (AU-PATTEC), its contribution to the implementation of the AU-PATTEC Plan of Action in some countries of the continent — namely, Botswana, Burkina Faso,

Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania — and the contributions of some member States and United Nations specialized agencies in support of these efforts.

With regard to malaria, the development of sterile insect techniques for the control and eradication of mosquitoes is crucial. Over 90 per cent of the world's malaria cases occur in Africa, where malaria causes about 2 million deaths yearly. The Agency should be able to intensify its research, with a view to enabling the use of the technique for the control and eradication of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes; it should, however, involve more and more African and other developing countries' scientific and research institutes in the research programme. In this context, we welcome the level of progress recorded in the development of the technique for the control and eradication of malaria-transmitting mosquitoes, and note with appreciation the important activities carried out in the Sudan, in Île de la Réunion and at the Agency's laboratories in Seibersdorf, Austria.

The increasing number of new cases of cancer, and consequently the number of deaths it causes worldwide, particularly in developing countries, threatens socio-economic development. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cancer is the second most common killer in the world today, after cardiovascular disease; 12.5 per cent of all deaths worldwide are currently caused by cancer. WHO predicts that cancer will reach epidemic proportions, rising from 11 million new cases in 2002 to 16 million new cases in 2020. The largest increases are foreseen in developing countries.

The use of existing nuclear technology for diagnosis and treatment could cure many victims, if cancer is detected early. Unfortunately, the appropriate technologies, including cobalt radiotherapy, are not available for most cancer patients in developing countries.

We therefore note with appreciation that in May 2005 the World Health Assembly welcomed the initiative of the Agency in establishing a Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), and requested the Director-General of WHO to explore the feasibility of initiating the development of a joint programme with the IAEA for cancer prevention, control, treatment and research. We commend the emphasis given to the cooperation between the two organizations, involving other relevant United Nations bodies and other stakeholders, including scientific and professional organizations, to implement this crucial programme. We encourage Member States, relevant organizations and other non-traditional donors to contribute to its implementation.

In this context, the Angolan Government notes with appreciation the Board of Governors' decision on 25 September this year to suspend the operation of Financial Regulation 7.03(c) until 31 October 2006, as recommended in document GOV/2006/25/Rev.2, in order to permit member States to contribute their respective individual allocations of the final cash surplus from the 2004 regular budget towards the minimum funding requirement of the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is now a pandemic, with an estimated 38.6 million people living with the disease worldwide. In January this year joint United Nations and World Health Organization estimates were that the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) had killed more than 25 million people since it was first recognized in 1981, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. Most of these deaths are occurring in sub-Saharan Africa, thus retarding economic growth and eliminating human capital, and consequently increasing poverty. The Angolan Government notes with appreciation the Agency's regional project entitled "Initiatives in HIV-Molecular Epidemiology and Immunology in Support of the UNAIDS-WHO African AIDS Vaccine Programme", and encourages the exploration of further possible partnerships with the relevant national, regional and international institutions.

I turn to the management of water resources. Access to safe drinking water is a crucial factor in improving living standards around the world; it is a basic necessity that is still unavailable to a large part of the world's population. In this context, we welcome the proclamation of the period 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", to bring about a better focus on the critical linkage between water and human development at all levels, and to improve the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

Recognizing that the Agency has continuously demonstrated the importance of isotope techniques for water resources development and management, particularly for groundwater management in arid and semi-arid regions and for an improved understanding of the water cycle, my country encourages the Organization to proceed, along with other relevant United Nations agencies and regional bodies, to develop human resources in isotope hydrology at regional training centres.

With regard to technical cooperation between the International Atomic Energy Agency and my Government, I would first like to stress that the Republic of Angola became a member of the Agency in November 1999. Since then my country has benefited from assistance provided by the Agency under its Technical Cooperation Programme. At present, the ongoing programme consists of four projects: the establishment of Angola's first radiotherapy centre; upgrading the capability to use nuclear techniques for diagnosis and monitoring of animal diseases; veterinary drug-residue monitoring; and human resources development.

Angola has also been participating in several regional and interregional projects included in the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (AFRA) programmes. In this connection, we wish to make special mention of the project entitled "Coastal Zone Management to Address the Adverse Effects of Harmful Algal Blooms", in which South Africa and Namibia are also participating.

Furthermore, my Government has submitted for the Agency's consideration, under the 2007-2008 technical cooperation programming cycle, 10 project concepts dealing with the establishment of the first nuclear medicine capability; management of the most common cancers in Angola; isotope-based molecular techniques for malaria control; assessment of marine pollution from offshore petroleum exploration (phase II); improvement of food crops through mutation breeding; effect of biofertilizers and inorganic fertilizers in the growth and yield of maize; ionizing radiation in food crops and effect on animal consumption; and industrial non-destructive testing.

However, it is important to stress that the benefits from the Agency's assistance can be maximized only if it includes the training of nationals in nuclear science and technology. This being the case, my Government thanks the Agency for all these most valuable actions taken under the Technical Cooperation Programme aimed at enhancing the knowledge of our technicians: the provision of training, expert advice and equipment; participation in seminars, workshops, conferences, scientific visits, fellowships; and so on.

With regard to the application of the Agency's safeguards in the Middle East, the Republic of Angola, in principle, supports the basic and inalienable right of States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as stipulated in article IV, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with their legal obligations as contained in articles I and II. With the same conviction, my Government encourages all NPT States parties to respect the statutory mandate of the Agency to verify compliance with the Treaty. Therefore, my Government appeals to all Member States involved in negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran on its nuclear programme to continue using dialogue to achieve a peaceful solution.

To conclude, the Republic of Angola has every reason to recommend approval by the General Assembly of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Ms. Mladineo (Croatia): Croatia aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. Therefore, I shall limit my remarks to a few issues of particular interest to my country.

First, let me stress that Croatia was honoured and pleased to be elected to the membership of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency at the September General Conference. Our candidature demonstrated our appreciation of the Agency's unique contribution to peace, security and development in the world, as well as our interest in playing a part in its endeavours. We will do our utmost to live up to the demanding challenge of Board membership at this difficult and critical time for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Secondly, I would like to restate Croatia's appreciation of the Agency's lucid and comprehensive annual report, appreciation already expressed by our Foreign Minister in Vienna. The Republic of Croatia is also sponsoring the draft resolution on the report.

Croatia commends the Agency for the successful continuation of its wide-ranging activities in the fields of technology, safety and verification. We particularly emphasize our support for the efforts of the Director General and the secretariat to continuously upgrade and develop the Agency's concepts and means in approaching new challenges, and to be, as the Director General has put it, "ahead of the game", especially regarding dangerous trends in nuclear proliferation.

Croatia attaches special importance to the Agency's efforts to achieve the universal application of a strengthened safeguards system and to develop a new international or multinational approach to managing the proliferation-sensitive aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle.

The fact that there are still 105 countries, out of 183, where the additional protocol is not yet applied is a cause of great concern and makes its universalization an urgent priority. There is no doubt in our mind of the parallel need to significantly increase the Agency's verification resources if we want it to be able to deal effectively with the increased verification demands.

As far as the multinational approach to the fuel cycle is concerned, Croatia welcomed the recent discussion on the new framework for the nuclear-fuel cycle during the special event at the fiftieth General Conference. That discussion highlighted the relevance of the assurance-of-supply concept for the benefit of both non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It also showed that the issue requires thorough and sensitive consideration from the point of view of safeguarding the rights and obligations of non-nuclear countries under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Thirdly, I would like to reaffirm Croatia's commitment to furthering our productive relationship with the Agency. This includes our close and beneficial technical cooperation in the areas of health, environment and capacity-building, and also the implementation of our international obligations.

Croatia was one of the first member States to sign and ratify the model additional protocol, the amendment to article VI of the IAEA Statute and the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Croatia also supports the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the Supplementary Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

Additionally, Croatia recognizes the special value of the Agency's regional technical cooperation activities. We are pleased to see a growing number of foreign participants, especially from our neighbourhood, at various events in our country. Croatia has offered to act as a leading or alternate leading counterpart in the preparations for a number of the 2007 regional projects. We are ready to further strengthen our role in the region, bearing in mind the importance of coordinated and effective regional measures to maximize the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and confront the growing risk of proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

Finally, let me reiterate Croatia's full commitment to a strengthened role for the Agency in confronting the new security threats and helping the world along the path towards sustainable non-proliferation and genuine Atoms for Peace. The Agency's challenges are important and difficult, as the annual report makes perfectly clear. It also makes it clear that they can be met only through the continuing active partnership of member States and the Agency. Croatia pledges its unequivocal commitment to that partnership.

Mr. Maqungo (South Africa): My delegation commends the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the insightful report before the Assembly on the activities of the Agency for 2005. The report is yet another impressive example of the Agency's untiring efforts to promote the peaceful application of nuclear technology, nuclear safety and nuclear verification.

South Africa notes with appreciation that the Agency continues to play an important role in the context of the emerging trend of rediscovering the viability of nuclear energy — an area in which many countries, including my own, are reviewing their policies. Many countries are increasingly of the view that nuclear power can make a major contribution to meeting energy needs for a large number of both developed and developing countries. As a result, the promotion of nuclear energy is fast reaching unprecedented levels and becoming a priority because of the belief that it could contribute to the improvement of living standards, assist in combating poverty and help to promote sustainable development, thereby strengthening international peace and security.

South Africa strongly believes that the promotion of nuclear energy comes with a unique responsibility: to enhance the regulatory capabilities of developing countries through technology transfers and capacity-building, with special emphasis being given to technical cooperation within developing countries.

In this connection, even though South Africa is in the favourable position of being able to contemplate the use of nuclear energy through the use and development of our own resources, we commend the Agency's Technical Assistance Programme, which is an important demonstration of the Agency's continued support in helping developing countries to improve the living standards and well-being of their people by combating chronic diseases, such as cancer.

The prevalence of cancer, which is increasing in developing countries, requires new and determined efforts to curb the disease. The South African Department of Health has identified the fight against chronic diseases, including cancer, as a priority area for the next five years. It is for that reason that South Africa reiterates its support for the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT), which is one of the important priorities of the Agency. South Africa will continue to strongly support PACT and the creation of the Agency's Nobel Cancer and Nutrition Fund to provide cancer- and nutrition-related fellowships in the developing world, in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

In an effort to give practical meaning to that commitment, South Africa announced that it will contribute its share of the Agency's cash surplus, amounting to $19,472, to the funding for PACT. We hope that that humble gesture will make a contribution to the early detection and possible prevention of cancer.

As it has done on previous occasions elsewhere, South Africa takes this opportunity to reaffirm that the IAEA is the only internationally recognized competent authority for verifying compliance with safeguards agreements and States' peaceful application of nuclear capabilities. In this connection, my delegation recognizes the important role that the additional protocol can play as a supplementary measure to provide the necessary confidence and the desired assurances that member States are applying their nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes, and that no declared or undeclared material is diverted to nuclear weapons programmes.

South Africa believes that as States members of the IAEA we have all committed ourselves to providing the Agency with the support and assistance it needs to fulfil its safeguards and verification mandate. This commitment derives from our membership of the Agency, as well as from the legally binding agreements that we have concluded. Furthermore, it is South Africa's view that countries with access to advanced technologies have a greater responsibility to provide assurances and to build confidence in the peaceful nature of their nuclear programmes.

With regard to the issue of safety and security, South Africa has on many occasions stated that the Agency should continue to play an important role to help maintain the safety and security of nuclear activities. In this regard, South Africa commends the Agency for work done to set appropriate norms for the safety and security of member States and integrate them into their national norms and ensure universal adherence to, and full implementation of, the relevant international legally binding instruments on nuclear activities. This is a step in the right direction — a direction that is essential if we are to establish and maintain a high level of nuclear safety around the world.

The total elimination of all nuclear weapons is our common objective. That would constitute another significant step in the right direction. My delegation continues to believe that the issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are inextricably linked. Our concerted efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons should therefore be matched by a concurrent effort to eliminate in a verifiable and irreversible manner all nuclear weapons and to achieve universal adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Furthermore, South Africa believes that without any real progress on the elimination of highly enriched uranium and other fissile materials in military applications, including plutonium, the threat to global security cannot diminish. By focusing exclusively on highly enriched uranium in civilian applications, we may well generate a misunderstanding that can only contribute to creating a false sense of security.

We therefore reiterate our call on nuclear-weapon States to work expeditiously towards the total

elimination of nuclear weapons and for the commencement without delay of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, international and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Last but not least, I again thank all delegations for the support and cooperation provided to South Africa during its tenure as President of the IAEA's fiftieth General Conference, held in Vienna last month. That jubilee Conference ended successfully with the adoption of many resolutions and decisions manifesting the member States' rededication to expand the peaceful use of atomic energy. As we did at the General Conference, my delegation calls on the General Assembly to take the call of former United States President Dwight Eisenhower for "atoms for peace" one step further to "atoms only for peace".

In conclusion, with these comments my delegation fully supports and co-sponsors the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, introduced by the delegation of Slovenia.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me at the outset to express our gratitude to Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his tireless efforts and for the insightful report he has presented to the General Assembly. The report indicates that the Agency is increasingly developing its activities in many areas of nuclear technology that are of great interest and importance to the human community.

In October 1956, when the International Atomic Energy Agency was created in response to expectations and concerns that had resulted from the advent of the nuclear age, one of its main objectives, as set out in article II of its Statute, was "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". On the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Agency, we are now in a position to assess the extent to which that specialized agency has achieved its main objectives after half a century of activity.

It is a well-recognized fact that nuclear technology has broad peaceful applications in numerous fields, ranging from food, medicine and agriculture to providing a renewable source of energy. In particular, the IAEA has a specific mandate in relation to nuclear power. The rapid growth in global energy demand is making a high priority of all energy reserves. Concerns over climate change have particularly highlighted the advantages of nuclear power in terms of its minimal greenhouse-gas emissions. According to the Agency, the sustained nuclear safety and productivity record over the past 20 years has made nuclear energy both reliable and cost effective.

In paragraph f of its resolution GC(43)RES/14 of 1 October 1999, the Agency recognized that

> "many countries consider nuclear power, being a climatically benign source of energy, to be an eligible option under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol".

In that context, the IAEA General Conference requested the Director General to pursue efforts to strengthen the technical cooperation activities of the Agency aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries and by continuing to assist them in nuclear energy production for those States pursuing it as a component of their energy mix in the twenty-first century.

Moreover, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), concluded in 1968, reaffirmed that important objective of the Agency and recognized the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Under article IV of the NPT, States parties have undertaken to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In fact, the inalienable right of all NPT States parties to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, constitutes one of the three major pillars upon which the NPT is founded.

Notwithstanding such requirements, the cooperation of the developed countries, as the main suppliers of nuclear high technology, with the developing nations has remained at an unsatisfactory level. It is worth mentioning that, after almost 50 years of existence, the budget of the international cooperation section of the Agency remains unsteady due to its voluntary nature and the conditionality imposed by certain member States on its allocations.

There are currently 442 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries. However, to date, the use of nuclear power has been concentrated mainly in industrialized countries. In fact, nuclear cooperation between suppliers and recipients has been beset by restrictions, obstacles and disruption. Instead of promoting cooperation, the "nuclear haves" club, laden with discrimination and a lack of transparency, was created, inter alia, to hamper the access of NPT developing countries to nuclear power technology under the pretext of non-proliferation concerns.

At the same time, there is a dangerous trend at work, moving in the opposite direction of safeguarding the NPT and ensuring its universality. Under that trend, those who have chosen not to accede to the NPT not only are not subject to any pressure to do so, but are also encouraged and rewarded in different ways. As an example, the Israeli regime has been allowed to acquire a large stockpile of nuclear weapons in the volatile Middle East region and to defy the will of all regional States and the international community to turn the Middle East into a zone free from nuclear weapons. Emboldened by the irresponsible approach of a few powers, the Israeli regime has also become so audacious as to unleash a masquerade of lies and deception against Iran's peaceful nuclear programme.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the latest victim of weapons of mass destruction, strongly believes that the international community must strive to ensure that the nightmare visited upon the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never befall any people again. The only absolute guarantee is obviously the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as stipulated by the NPT and also emphasized in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. However, as an interim measure, the international community must take all necessary steps to ensure universality of the non-proliferation regime and the IAEA safeguard mechanisms. Likewise, the IAEA could and should play a decisive role through vigorously pursuing a balanced and non-discriminatory application of the provisions of the NPT and the IAEA safeguards.

Like every other State that has acceded to the NPT, Iran considers the pursuit and development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to be its inalienable right, and has thus invested extensive human and material resources in this field. At the same time, as repeatedly stated, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran's defence doctrine. All reports by the IAEA since 2003 have been indicative of the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme, and the Agency has repeatedly reaffirmed that it "has not seen any diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices" in Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. The Director General of the IAEA has also stressed this in various public statements.

It is regrettable that, despite all those clear assertions, certain circles, in an ill-intended and politically motivated propaganda campaign, have attempted to distort the facts about Iran's peaceful nuclear programme. A case in point is the recent IAEA reaction to the baseless allegations and distortion of facts contained in a United States Congressional report on Iran's nuclear programme. In a letter dated 12 September this year, the Agency described the report as containing "erroneous, misleading and unsubstantiated information". We greatly appreciate the Agency's vigilance and its timely reaction to such a baseless report.

I also take this opportunity to once again express our utmost appreciation to the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement for their support for my country's peaceful nuclear programme, contained in the statement issued at the Havana Summit in September this year. That statement indicates that the international community, especially the developing countries, is determined, despite all pressures and fabrication of facts, to defend the inalienable right of NPT-adherent States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

I conclude by recalling that the Islamic Republic of Iran has demonstrated its readiness to resume negotiations, without any preconditions, with its counterparts to assure them of the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. To this end, we responded, in good faith, to the package proposed by the 5+1 Group with a view to providing a reasonable basis to build confidence through constructive negotiations. Indeed, such negotiations should serve two fundamental objectives, guaranteeing Iran's inalienable right to peaceful nuclear technology, without discrimination, and guaranteeing that its nuclear programme will remain peaceful.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.